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CHARM AND COURTESY
IN
CONVERSATION

BY
FRANCES BENNETT CALLAWAY

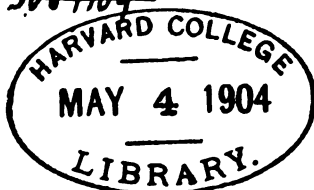
Author of "Charm and Courtesy in
Letter-Writing," etc.

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Jim M. 1904

Copyright, 1904
By Frances Bennett Callaway

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NEW YORK

I send this book to you, my friend, not to improve your speech, which has its own endearing charms, but in remembrance of those fireside talks together which have ennobled and enriched our ideals of a true conversation.

There can be no doubt that of all accomplishments prized in modern society, that of being agreeable in conversation is the very first.

MAHAFFY

"Pure and brilliant society doubles the value of life."

"Companionship is the choicest thing on earth, the rarest, the most valued."

+ "In conversation, we become possessed of each other for the time being."

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warm sympathetic words is the beginning of conversation, and the question first arises, How can I supply this need? How can I be of service?

X
/ A selfish person shut up entirely within self, thinking only of self and knowing only what concerns self, has so little that is worthy of exchange in conversation that he cannot be considered of any special value to society. To become worth while socially, the first step is to become interested in something outside of self, and this requires the exercise of the highest form of will-power, known as interested attention. Only the disciplined mind has this power of interested attention, which is the whole man concentrated.

When the attention wanders about

If like Mr. you accept
the idea
of the

aimlessly with no disciplined thought, no strong purpose behind it, many confused, dim impressions are gathered into the mind and immediately lost, by which process the mind is weakened and becomes finally like a strainer which retains nothing.

On the contrary, when the attention, interested, is sent out with the definite thought and strong purpose back of it to get something—something that will enrich the life—it brings back an impression so brilliant and so clear as to remain and illumine the mind.

These impressions may be of very simple things, a morning scene, the perfume of a flower, a strain of music, the gold of an evening sky, the kindness of a human heart, but if the quality be pure and fine,

and if there be many of these ideas they will permeate the whole being with rich and precious values.

In time this individuality comes to dwell in a palace laid with jewels of observation, refined with music, perfume, colors, enriched with treasures of memory, illumined not only with pictures of what has been, but with ten thousand hopeful little candles of what shall be. Having enriched herself, she is now prepared to enrich others, and we say of such a one that she is genial, attractive, magnetic.

Such service in conversation is possible only with an unselfish heart and an awakened mind.

•

DESTRUCTIVE CONVERSATION

X A vast proportion of all the misunderstanding, unjust criticism and unfair reviewing in this world comes from a failure to grasp what is said by others. Accurate quickness of perception is required to form honest judgment.

CHARLES G. LELAND

You will not live long without knowing that though you speak with the tongues of men or of angels and have not charity, it profiteth you nothing.

BISHOP HUNTINGTON

Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used till they are seasoned.

HOLMES

If thou thinkest twice before thou speakest once, thou will speak twice the better for it.

PENN

CHAPTER II

THE mind is often lazy as well as the body and, working heedlessly and thoughtlessly through the five senses, gathers in confused and inaccurate impressions. These inaccurate impressions crowded in dim, shapeless forms into the memory need much patient reflection to restore them to any semblance of truth, but patient reflection means work, and the indolent mind finds it much easier to shape and color its impressions with any passing fancy or personal feeling that may be entertained for the time.

Such impressions distorted with suspicion or prejudice, colored with envy, jealousy or an unreasonable temper, now become false, but sent out unscrupu-

lously as true, naturally lead to all manner of misunderstandings and misrepresentations. Neighbors and friends are wrongfully accused, business interests unsettled, lovers separated, families turned against each other, and the most sacred and beautiful relations of society pulled down and destroyed.

We do not purpose with deliberate malice to injure the neighbor who has never harmed us, or do wrong to a friend who is good and kind, but we are constantly engaged in this destructive conversation from sheer heedlessness. A man listens or looks heedlessly, hurries some dim impression into his mind to be colored darkly with any fear, worry or suspicion lurking there, and then in some unguarded moment this evil liveried

thought is given vitality and force in words and sent out to work incalculable X harm.

K The great crime of conversation to-day is thoughtlessness, and with thoughtlessness is too often associated that weakness of character which through fear leads to suspicion and from suspicion to evil reports, insinuations, whisperings that cut men's throats, and all manner of scandals. In Shakespeare's church at Stratford-on-Avon, a cunning old friar on one of the *misereres* has carved the figure of a woman whose wide tongue hanging from her mouth reaches clear below her girdle, a silent but eloquent mirror held up all these hundreds of years to men and women who engage in evil and destructive speaking. 

CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATION

Let your conversation be constructive and
not destructive.

FRANCES WILLARD

X Speak not injurious words either in jest or
earnest.

WASHINGTON

The good we might do with our tongues
if we use them for cheer or helpfulness, it is
impossible to state.

J. R. MILLER

And so I charge ye: by the thorny crown
And by the cross on which the Saviour bled,
And by your own soul's hope of fair renown,
Let something good be said!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

CHAPTER III

DESTRUCTIVE conversation, requiring no capital either of heart or brain, is easily carried on, for any witless tongue can deal in suspicions, innuendoes, false reports, unkind and unjust criticisms, and with them destroy the kindest social feeling.

Constructive conversation, on the other hand, requires some preparation of earnest thought, a mind actively at work, and a heart warm with sympathy, giving one the power to express instantly the good opinion, the true representations, the generous word of praise which build up and knit together all delightful society.

Back of the good word must always lie the impulse of a good thought, and St. Paul had this in mind when he counselled, "Whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." When our thoughts are full of good things, we cannot help speaking of them, and as we speak of them we spread them abroad and give them out to others.

✧ Listening to stories of patience, loveliness, heroism, we feel these virtues are being transplanted into our hearts, where in good time they will come to bloom, adding beauty and fragrance to our own as well as other lives.

All constructive conversation is full of brightness and good cheer because the

very essence of such conversation is the courage to look on the bright side of life. The most cheering part of it all is the power there is in a helpful word for whole-hearted, loving service. A splendid illustration of this is given in the life of George Williams. Upon his first going away from home in his fifteenth year, George Williams, a thoughtless but capable young lad with a hasty temper and a warm heart, was thrown in close association with two or three fellow apprentices who were earnest and sincere Christians. Through their loving, faithful words, the young lad was within a year won to a life of devoted Christian service. Afterwards, Sir George Williams became the leading spirit in the Y. M. C. A., now known in every land

under the sun. When a whole life may be so glorified by friendly words rightly spoken, what value may we not place upon conversation which stimulates and encourages in the human heart whatever is pure and reverent and good.

A delightful incident of the service conversation may be given in the following letter from a society woman to a friend.

“Did I write you of my good fortune in securing a position for an old friend? She has had a hard life and came to us with no future plans at all. I spoke of her to an acquaintance, who in turn mentioned it to her sister-in-law, whose aunt in Yonkers proved to have a friend who needed a companion. The chain was soon completed, and Miss Opal recently

spent a day with us after a month in her new home. Her very looks have changed with the pleasure, a double one, being of use and being appreciated—and it all came from a few words so easily spoken.”

There must be real goodness in human nature to have built up such neighborliness, such good comradeship, such interest and affection as we see everywhere around us, and when we think of how many are made happy every day by kind and cheering words, what purposes are strengthened, what friendships knit together, what love receives new values, we cannot but believe that in many hearts are imprinted the words Frances Willard always kept over her writing desk:

“Let something good be said.”

THE GRACE OF SILENCE

The silence which precedes words is so much grander than the grandest words because in it are created those thoughts of which words are the mere outward clothing.

CAROLINE FOX

I am very fond of the society of ladies, I like their beauty, I like their delicacy, I like their vivacity and I like their silence.

JOHNSON

X The first virtue is to restrain the tongue; he approaches nearest the gods who knows how to be silent, even though he is in the right.

CATO

[There is a gift beyond the reach of art of being eloquently silent.

BOVEE

CHAPTER IV

CAROLINE Fox, who belonged to the society of Friends, believed that when the soul is perfectly still before God we hear His voice, and in spirit our conversation is with Him.

In this stillness as we enter the presence of Life and Thought, there is a vitalization, a recreation of the heart and mind that comes to us from no other source.

"I have great respect for Amy's religion," remarked a thoughtful man whose wife attended Friends' meeting. "There must be a good deal in it when she can sit a whole hour in silence."

There was indeed something in Amy's religion which refreshed her during that hour of silence when hushed and bowed in God's presence, such angelic thoughts of love, patience and calm entered her heart as transformed her whole life.

"Grant Sister C—— the grace of silence" prayed President Finney at a church social where Sister C's tongue had been particularly troublesome. Many another pastor has made the same prayer with fervor in the privacy of his closet. St. James, without doubt, had passed through some fiery experience of burning words before writing his impassioned letter to all the Jews abroad on the need of bridling the tongue.

In the dawn of civilization, men gave us the benefit of their experience in the

proverb, "He that keepeth his tongue, keepeth his life," but we neglect to heed this wise counsel. Only last evening, over a cup of tea, Miss Evelyn said one or two hasty words which has lost her the paradise she was about to enter. She would give worlds to recall them but it is too late. We never can take back what has been said. It takes years of stern schooling and experience to impress this upon us. Paul was an aged man and acquainted with grief when he wrote to the Corinthians, "Endure all things." Endure all things in silence, with love, rather than send one scathing word which cannot be recalled, for it will surely return to pierce your own heart. "The word unspoken is like the sword in the scabbard, thine," said Quarles, "but

once spoken thy sword is in another's hand."

Nothing illustrates more curiously how thought and feeling beat back and forth between human beings without any help from words than our widely differing kinds of silence, for people differ in silence as much as in conversation. The silence of the listless, disinterested or sullen nature which falls upon all around with the gloom of a November day is entirely different from the silence of listening, warm-hearted sympathetic attention, which brings human nature to most generous flowering in speech. The silence of a mighty, overpowering grief penetrates the heart, while the silence of

✕ { the brave, self-controlled man under great provocation has more weight than

words. The embarrassing silence between two who do not understand each other seems in a few moments to stretch into years, so great is the strain and tension. In contrast is the eloquent silence between friends who understand each other perfectly—tender, luminous, palpitating with all the comfort of love. "The presence of a friend who can feel with us, even though imperfectly," writes Vandyke, "the mere silent presence of a friend, even though he be asleep, as the friends of Jesus were, is something which enhances pleasure and mitigates sorrow in every true and noble heart."

SNARES AND PITFALLS

Thou art snared with the words of thy
mouth.

PROV. 6:2

"The imprudent man reflects on what he has
said; the wise man on what he is going to
say."

None but a fool is always right. HARE

I remember there was trouble with Blank.
The trouble with him was that he didn't know
anything and hadn't the faintest perception of
it.

TOM REED

Be silent always when you doubt your sense.
POPE

CHAPTER V

THE imprudent man often has cause to repent his rash promise, his hasty judgment or hyperbolical statement. Listening heedlessly and speaking without thought, this impulsive man, if he chance to fall into the company of the critical and suspicious, is snared by his own words at every step. In view of this very human frailty of thoughtless listening and heedless speaking, we should constantly be on our guard to listen attentively, to observe faithfully, and to speak with definite clearness. Confusion and misunderstandings often arise because we fail to give others a definitely

clear impression of what is in our own minds; and it is because so few take pains to be perfectly definite that inaccuracy of speech has come to be a common reproach against our conversation today.

While accuracy is of inestimable value, we must strive not to be painfully precise or so stubbornly positive as to insist that we are always in the right and our opponent in the wrong. We cannot in every instance believe the evidence of our senses. Eyes and ears sometimes deceive us and memory as well as judgment may be at fault. For this reason it is important that we should correct these sense-impressions and warm and illumine our minds by frequent interchange of experiences. The man who sees the world

through but one loophole has indeed a narrow outlook on life.

Another danger into which the quick and impulsive are likely to fall, is that of 'being over-solicitous for a friend's welfare, even to the extremes of fussiness and inquisitiveness. Kindly interested questions open golden opportunities of speech, and a kind word of advice with a warm friendly interest back of it is always of value, but sentimentalities and moral lectures measured off by the yard are taken for what they are worth—mere rubbish.

The man who cannot rule his own spirit, but loses control of his temper may always expect to come out of an argument degraded, if not humiliated, for vehemence of voice and vulgar hurling

of epithets never yet took the place of calm reason and good logic. On the whole, it is better not to censure people either in general company or at home unless some one will be greatly bettered by the criticism. It is never the most refined and agreeable way of entertaining present company, this tongue-lashing of the absent—and even if deserved, is not the kind of a favor one would really like to have returned.

4 | Do not exact too much admiration for self, children, or possessions. There can be no greater strain on one's good nature than to be continually called upon to give prettily turned compliments or flattering opinions. Beautiful women sometimes render themselves hideously tiresome in conversation for this very

reason, while a modest, unobtrusive little woman, who never looks for gifts of compliments, will rest one like music.

The open-hearted man is peculiarly liable to be caught in the mesh of gossip. Like Sam in *Polly's Secret*, he tells all he knows.

"Jane," said Polly, hoping to create a diversion, "Sam tells you most everything, don't he?"

"Well," Jane replied, cautiously, "I s'pose 'taint possible for anybody to be round where Sam is a great while and not get the heft of what he knows. He's a great confider, is Sam."

Another dangerous pitfall is the long silent pause that in the embarrassment of the moment compels one to rack his

brains for any scrap of light material with which to rekindle conversation. "In this great peril," writes Madame de Girard with sarcasm, "everything is permitted. The hostess will recount the confidence of her most intimate friends, she will tell her own secrets, she will even say what she thinks."

Even a greater peril awaits the man who from thoughtlessness or ignorance fails to recognize the personality of one with whom he is conversing. To mistake the silence of shy, trembling diffidence for the haughtiness of pride, to judge a man cold when he is warm-hearted, to confide in constancy and affection and find in some inopportune moment a nature variable and full of changes,—such errors in judgment lead to most

humiliating embarrassments and grievous heartaches.

These are only a few of the snares and pitfalls which beset us in daily conversation and bring the impulsive and unwary to grief and confusion. The only way to avoid stumbling into them is to walk with vigilance, carrying with us always the lantern of love, and when the path before us is very slippery, setting before the mind's eye two useful finger-posts:

Don't talk so fast.

Don't talk so much.

A TIME TO SPEAK

"Are we not often selfish and thoughtless in our silences, and do we not all of us need a warning?"

After all, sympathy and good-will may be a greater force than wealth, and we can all extend to others a kindly feeling and courteous consideration that will make life sweeter and better.

HELEN GOULD

**Ask God to give thee skill
In comfort's art,
That thou mayst consecrated be
And set apart
Unto a life of sympathy.
For heavy is the weight of ill
On every heart,
And comforters are needed much
Of Christlike touch.**

A. E. HAMILTON

CHAPTER VI

"I AM a quiet, reticent young woman. I am never understood nor do I make any effort to be."

This is one side of the story. The other side of the story appeared in print not long ago with incidents of reticence which are only too common.

"A young woman who was preparing herself to earn her own living was received as a guest for the winter into a city home. She was depressed and moody, so to brighten her lot her friends planned pleasures, gave her tickets to the opera and lectures, took her about with their young people and treated her always as a special guest. She accepted

the favors without a word, and never in the course of the winter showed the slightest enthusiasm over any of her good times. When she went away she said to her hostess, who, attentive to the last, accompanied her visitor to the station, 'It seems absurd to thank you for your kindness to me,' so she did not try. She wrote a 'bread-and-butter letter,' telling of pleasant days elsewhere, but with never a grateful reference to the events of the winter or word of appreciation of her city friends."

This young woman possibly was grateful, but she had never cultivated the sweet courtesy of expressing her gratitude, so she went away misunderstood. How can one understand a heart that is selfishly shut up within itself?

"A chest full of gold and a heart full of love," writes Phillips Brooks, "of what use are they unless you open them?"

Only God knows how the human heart grows hungry for the kind word that is withheld, and the man who refuses it is the meanest miser in the whole world. Speaking of the low dive where he was at one time employed, Owen Kildare writes:

"Over and over again, I have seen men there for whose education I would have gladly given years of my life, and who by one word of encouragement or sympathy could have rekindled the dying flame of hope, of self-respect in some fellow-being, but that word was never spoken."

It was a timid girl who afterwards did give the word of sympathy and encouragement needed to awaken Owen Kildare's slumbering talent and to make of him the noble and useful man he is today.

A foreigner in this country, a prodigal son living upon the very husks of life, one Sunday attended a church service. As he was going away, a motherly woman in the pew gave him her hand and asked him to come again. The friendly hand-clasp, the kindly voice, the tones of the lady's voice recalled as in a flash, home, mother, forgotten promises, and the man's heart was melted like wax. He did go to church again, his life was changed, and afterwards he became a veritable Great-heart in leading other

young men in the way that is right and true. The mighty and purifying influence going out from this man's life may be traced back to a few kind and friendly words which came sincerely from a good woman's heart.

POLITE LYING

A gentleman that loves to hear himself talk,
and will speak more in a minute than he will
stand to in a month.

SHAKESPEARE

I don't like to have men say sweet things to
my face and then go across the street and say
something hateful about me. I have no respect
for such men.

ISAIAH HUDNUT

I don't like to have people tell me they are
glad to see me, and when I am gone say some-
thing different. It isn't nice.

MARTHA SLADE

Hateful to me as the gate of Hades is that
man who hides one thing in his heart and
speaks another.

HOMER

CHAPTER VII

AN evangelist addressing a large audience one evening asked every man and woman present who had never told a lie to rise. The audience remained conspicuously seated, an incident showing that not only the desperately wicked but also good-intentioned people are given to lying.

Those who have made a special study of lying, going back to the cause producing the effect, find that in children lies are the product of an excessive imagination, corresponding to the myth age of the race, and disappearing when the age of reason comes.

With many, lying is simply an imitation. Hearing others lie, we almost unconsciously fall into the same habit.

The most common and prevailing reason is weakness and fear. We fear to show our ignorance, we fear to lose the good opinion of our companions, we fear to hurt and offend people by speaking the plain truth.

Another cause is that spirit of egotism and boastfulness that at any cost will make Falstaff a brave man.

Lying may come from a desire to please which amounts to a mania with some sensitive people, or from sheer kind-heartedness, as in the case of the Irishman who assured the organ grinder that the next town was only a bit of a

way off when it was twelve miles distant, in consequence of which the poor Italian and his monkey were nearly dead with exhaustion when they reached their journey's end.

With children, lying comes from fear, from lack of knowledge, or from imagination which occupies so large a place in their thoughts and play. Another cause is contagion. It is said that children lie over and over again from contagion of ideas. An illustration is given in the history of the sixteenth century, when thousands were put to death as witches. The singular thing is that a great mass of these people were children, and nearly all the witnesses were children, generally girls from twelve to fourteen years of age.

Some people become confirmed liars through their continued habit of exaggeration, in consequence of which statements meant to be strong become ridiculously weak. An illustration is given in the following story by Alphonse Daudet. A woman in black enters a Paris omnibus whose whole appearance forces her neighbors to enquire into her misfortunes. These she relates, and all the occupants of the omnibus are moved. The conductor cannot hide his tears. She tells of the death of a first and of a second child; but at the death of the third interest begins to slacken; and when she reaches the death of the fourth, who was devoured by a crocodile on the banks of the Nile, everybody bursts out laughing.

People who take no pains to see things as they are, who are given to exaggeration, and careless in their statements, may so weaken the faculties of the mind as to bring on pseudophobia and become in a measure incapable of speaking the truth.

Specialists recommend as the best treatment of pseudophobia the practice of a series of exercises in exactness and accuracy, of both the hand and eye as well as of the brain. Learn from constant observation that one false step at the beginning brings failure at every step. Study cause and effect. Think of what you are going to say. Use common sense. All these are helps to truth-telling.

Also cultivate such deep principles of

honor and honesty that it will be impossible to speak what is not true, even when you speak quickly, and then—tell the truth every day. It is practice that helps one to form the habit of truth-telling.

The plain truth is not equally agreeable and interesting at all times and the strong pronouncement of valuable truth at unseasonable times does more harm than good; but this is no reason why good people should take to lying as vigorously as they do. If we cannot speak the truth without hurting or giving offence, it is at least in our power to remain silent.

The man who thinks to make life more flowery and easy by telling lies will sooner or later find himself beset with

innumerable difficulties and grievous entanglements. When he has intentionally varied from the truth three or four times he comes to be known among his friends as an habitual liar, for such talents are usually over-estimated. Fairly started in this tortuous path of lying, he is now expected to keep on with exaggerations and over-statements, while his friends mentally subtract half from everything that he says in order to keep somewhere near the truth. If he continues his agreeable, lying flatteries, the company take it as no compliment that he considers them silly enough to believe such romances; when he stops, they are offended at his lack of appreciation and interest. Should he declare that he is telling the exact truth, the

story is passed around as a joke and an infinitesimal portion of his statement is swallowed with a grain of salt.

The tones of a man's voice, the expression of his face, his unnecessary wordiness of speech, an insincerity in his gestures, attitude and very presence betray falsity and deceit, yet the man given to polite lying is pathetically unconscious of the spectacle he makes to the world.

Not only does one lose his own respect and the respect of his friends by lying, but he does what he can to destroy society by weakening the confidence we should have in the word of every good man. On the other hand, the man whose face, voice and gesture are illumined by the truth of his inmost being, will in

honest simplicity not only speak but live the truth, and strengthen that trust and confidence which admits one into a paradise of faithful, loving hearts in this world as well as in the next.

GETTING ALONG WITH PEOPLE

**Grand talent pour la conversation demand a
être accompagné d'une grande politesse.**

TROBLET

By long forbearing is a prince persuaded.

PROV. 25 : 15

**I always seek the good that is in people and
leave the bad to Him who made mankind and
knows how to round off the corners.**

GOETHE'S MOTHER

**"He exhaled a kind of unconscious brotherly
love that would make any one unbend and
look pleasant. He was an outspoken believer
in the goodness of mankind and basked com-
fortably in his own sunshine."**

CHAPTER VIII

IF good people were all good, and bad people were entirely bad, the problems of social life would be easily solved, for it would be easy enough to avoid the unworthy and associate with charming, amiable people who are pleasant to get along with. Difficulties arise, however, when we find that estimable people may have such exasperating traits of disposition that only an angel can abide with them, while the sinner may be warm-hearted, forgiving and generous to a fault—qualities of character we love and admire. To complicate affairs still more, we find in our own hearts directly oppos-

ing faults and virtues constantly battling with each other for mastery. Under these circumstances we cannot expect that every new relationship shall be a garden of roses, or every social duty a cup of unmixed joy.

Franklin in writing of an old servant said: "By being a little blind and a little deaf, I get along with him very well."

A practical woman upon being asked how she ever got along with some trying neighbors, replied with a dance of mirth in her eyes: "Oh, by making allowances—always making allowances; *there's a power in that.*"

Napoleon at St. Helena was once walking with a lady when a man came up with a load on his back. The lady

kept her side of the path and was ready to assert her precedence of sex, but Napoleon gently moved her to one side saying: "Respect the burden, Madame." When a man with a headache, heart-ache, or heavy load of care is sharp and irritable in speech, a gentle consideration will give a soft answer, respecting his burden. The affairs of this world could not go on for one day were it not for this chivalrous allowance men are constantly making for each other.

An eminent physician upon receiving the complaint that some of her patients were intolerably selfish and irritable, replied patiently, "Yes, my dears, and no doubt we are just as disagreeable to the angels."

A cultured lady, whose sound judg-

ment and decision of character had placed her in the position of leader in a number of charitable organizations, was asked why the work under her control ran so smoothly without a jar of any kind.

"It is the most difficult of all social intercourse," returned the lady with a sigh. "Stupidity, laziness, selfishness, are continually blocking our way. We run smoothly only by oiling our wheels constantly with tact and submitting with patience to impositions."

A lawyer, whose kind and genial personality had won for him a place among men, was asked if he had informed the opposing counsel what exasperations he suffered from the latter's client, when he replied: "No, it would injure her and

hurt her counsel, and what good would it do? A lawyer's work is to make the world a more peaceable place to live in."

These are a few instances of successful men and women who have made life more tolerable and more agreeable by forgetting self and considering other people, that is, by "great politeness." Politeness is not stupid, commonplace lying, as so many suppose, but the fine art of selecting from our real thoughts the kindest and best, and those adapted to bring out the brightest wit and finest feeling of our friend in the conversation we are engaged in.

To meet with favorable results in conversation, as in any other art, requires thoughtful study, considerable practice,

and the constant application of lessons we have already learned.

We learn from experience that even a stubborn man if handled with patience and kindness will become pliable and yielding, but we must give him time to turn about. Too often we are impatient and lack the skill to adjust ourselves to the temperament that is so different from our own.

"Jack doesn't get on with people," complained a business man of his partner. "He doesn't adapt himself to them. The fact is, he doesn't study human nature."

When a man argues with Jack, he answers him back hotly and impatiently, and in the "mutual flow of undervaluation" that follows, Jack always succeeds

in making an enemy and injuring the firm. When a man argues for the sake of argument or opposes us at every point for the sake of being contrary, it is useless to argue back, but we may ease our way, either by remaining perfectly silent, or by turning the conversation with such act and skill that our opponent's own words will carry us on our course. When we have learned to extract motive power even from the violence of the gale, there will be a sense of exhilaration in every blow we meet.

The man who pretends to be what he is not, or whose conceit makes him sensitive to every little pin-prick of ridicule or criticism, will suffer much at the hands of society. So will also the man whose gaze, being set upon himself, imagines

the eyes of every other man are also upon him.

Speaking of his own experience, Sydney Smith observes:

"It was not long before I made two very useful discoveries. First, that all mankind were not solely employed in observing me (a belief that all young people have), and next that shamming was of no use; that the world was very clear-sighted and soon estimated a man at his first value. This cured me, and I determined to be natural and let the world find me out."

To get on with people, then, let us not be over-critical, or judge them harshly, but be a little blind and very deaf to their faults, remembering their limitations and the frailties of human nature,

and that we too have faults which are equally disagreeable to other people.

Neither let us be violent in asserting our rights or resenting an injury, but rather "turn the other cheek also," as it is with moderation and gentleness the ill-dispositions of the world are to be overcome. There are times with all of us when nothing is more expedient or more becoming in conversation than a shut-mouth.

The world is made up, as the Lord intended it should be, of all sorts of people, and this attrition with hard, sharp, blunt and uneven natures is very useful in wearing off rough edges and polishing and perfecting such noble qualities of character as patience, endurance and humility. As for people who differ from

us, we must expect to find them everywhere, remembering that all bright and vivacious company depends upon this very difference of personality, which gives to conversation a jewel-like play and color it could never have if ideas in every mind were monotonously the same.

"On day," writes Herr de Brandt, "I was invited to dinner with the Count of Enzenberg at the residence of Prince von Bismarck in Berlin. The Count, a former chargé d'affaires in Paris, was a great collector of autographs. After the repast the Count exhibited a sheet of paper on which Guizot and Thiers had affixed their signatures. "It is very interesting," said Prince von Bismarck, "allow me to show this to my wife."

(She was sick in bed at that time.)
In a few minutes the Chancellor returned and returning the sheet of paper to the diplomat from Wurtemberg he added: "I hope that I did not spoil it by writing something on it."

Here follows what was written on the paper:

"My long life has taught me that it is necessary to forgive a good deal and forget nothing. GUIZOT"

"A little forgetfulness does not diminish the sincerity of forgiveness. "THIERS"

"My own life has taught me that I have a great deal to forget and a great deal for which to be forgiven. "V. BISMARCK"

UNPLEASANT IMPRESSIONS

It has actually happened once or twice when great friends have been staying with me that I have wished, when they left, I might not see them again for at least ten years.

"ELIZABETH AND HER GERMAN GARDEN"

Some folks' tongues are like the clocks as run on strikin', not to tell the time o' day but because there's summat wrong i' their own inside.

GEORGE ELIOT

"Jane had the gift of tongues, but the gift was not altogether desirable."

Her ordinary conversation has an edge on it like a traction engine and can be heard a block.

H. B. M.

However apt a man's internal furniture may be for conversation, he may make it useless by being externally disagreeable.

MAHAFFY

CHAPTER IX

To enter conversation in a hurried manner, with the voice pitched in shrill or harsh tones, conveys an unpleasant impression of unrest, which is increased almost to *mal de mer* if the speaker accompanies his words with contortions of the face, nervous motions of hands and feet, and constant rocking or swaying of his chair.

If the hurried, anxious speaker gives one an unpleasant impression, so does the man who draws out his words with exasperating deliberation and stops when you expect him to go on, and goes on when you think he had finished speaking. In the interval, having begun some reply

yourself, you are obliged to stop as suddenly and beg pardon for an interruption. Waiting half an hour for the end, you find that the story could have been given in two minutes if this man had only concentrated his thoughts. Pleasant conversation is possible only when people enter it with confidence and, having physical and mental powers well under control, progress directly with whatever they have to say.

The most disagreeable people to talk with are those who receive everything you say with indifference.

"I do not like to talk with Mr. B," said a friend of a well-known man; "he asks me questions and then yawns while I try to answer them."

Inattention, yawning indifference,

absent-mindedness, and interruptions are all intolerable, because they not only betray a complete absorption in self but a discourteous want of interest in another's conversation. A woman may be pardoned for being ugly, but she is never forgiven for lacking interest in people and events around her.

The boastful man prejudices at once the company whose favor he desires to win, and the acquaintance who uses the pronoun "I" twenty times when he remembers "you" once, is set down as a selfish and conceited boor. The French have a shrewd saying: "You should always avoid mention of yourself, since if it be in praise, people will regard it as a lie, while if you criticise yourself, they will take you at your

word, and accept it as an article of faith."

To assume an air of amused superiority is to chill any warmth of friendly liking in our hearts, for in such an atmosphere all play of tenderness and glow of feeling is repressed; we keep back our best from the conceited and scornful.

The scorner need not be envied his success in any social gathering, for one who is willing to sacrifice a friend for an evening's entertainment, who delights in mocking ridicule and witty flings, may, it is true, be flattered and laughed at for the moment, but secretly he is disliked and feared. Brave men who would not flinch in battle, fear and run away from a sarcastic woman.

To be always fretting and scolding surely leaves an unpleasant impression in the mind of the listener. "I wonder," complained an anxious mother, "why Mary never confides in me." This mother did not consider that for twenty years she had been finding fault with her daughter, until Mary to escape such unpleasantness shut herself up. Even a fool knows enough to go in the house when it rains. When we consider how immeasurably fretting and fault-finding add to our daily burdens, it is strange that we seldom think of being pleasant just for the sake of making others happy. It is so simple a thing to say pleasant words. It requires only a kind heart and a gracious, thoughtful spirit.

A sympathetic woman wishing to help a timid, struggling young artist took an artist already successful in her profession to call at the girl's studio. As the sketches were turned over, there was no word of praise, nor even any helpful criticisms, only polite comments, exasperatingly mild. Seeing the look of repressed hope and longing in the face of the poor little striving girl, the friend was almost ready to cry with disappointment.

"Why didn't you say something nice to that child, you miserable woman?" she burst out when they were in the street again.

"Say something 'nice' to her?" the other echoed in surprise; "why, it never entered my head to do so. Do you

suppose she expected me to say anything?"

One can also give pain simply by remembering too much. The following list of things to forget is valuable to any one who wishes to be agreeable as a companion:

Forget all the slander you ever heard.

Forget the fault-finding and give little thought to the cause which provoked it.

Forget the peculiarities of your friends and remember only the good points which make you fond of them.

Forget all personal quarrels and histories which you may have heard by accident, and which if repeated would seem a thousand times worse than they are.

Forget everything disagreeable.

Hilda, who did not understand English very well, used to write down every disagreeable word that was said to her, lest she should by any possibility forget it. One day she went to her employer complaining bitterly of some unkind speech which had hurt her feelings.

"What was it, Hilda?" asked the lady, full of sympathy.

"Oh, I don't know," returned Hilda, clasping her hands in distress. "I had it all written down, but *I have lost the paper.*"

The world does not like melancholy confidences and we do not consider "the acquisition of tongues" desirable when it brings lamentable accounts of aches, pains, disease, frets, worries, and mis-

cries. Tears, sighs, and lamentations are admirable properties of conversation only in romance, where, as every one knows, the distress of the hero and the anguish of the heroine could not progress without them.

“Mrs. B. is a pleasant person to invite,” remarked one of Mrs. B.’s friends; “she is unselfish and considerate and doesn’t have any aches or pains to talk about.”

There are times with all of us when we feel that it would lighten our cares and vexations to speak of them to some good friend, who possibly may see them from a different point of view and give us some bit of counsel or experience that will help us through our difficulties and discouragements.

"Lucy does make me so uncomfortable," said a brave woman who did not often complain. "When I go to her with any trouble, she will always try to distract my mind in some foolish way, like, 'Mary Ann, see that bird outside the window,' or 'Mary Ann, did the clouds look like rain when you came in?' or 'Mary Ann, have you heard how old Mrs. Wicks is to-day?' I don't go to Lucy any more with my troubles, I go to Susan and she will say, 'Yes, child, I know just how you feel. I have been through it all myself,' and Susan comforts me."

Perhaps the man or woman who gives the most unpleasant impression in conversation is the one whose only stock in trade is abuse, or sarcastic and unkind

speeches of absent friends and neighbors. An hour with such an acquaintance is a calamity.

So many people delight to be the bearers of bad news that it is said to be almost impossible to hear all about anything unless it be some piece of ill-luck. Guests there are willing to bring all the excruciating details of a death-scene to the dinner-table and, worse still, scandal-mongers who seize every opportunity to drag the filth of the streets into the drawing-room; but such undesirable acquaintances are quickly dropped from the best society, where a tacit understanding is maintained that conversation shall be a delightful entertainment, bringing all the comfort and joy of life to the soul of man—that it shall be in every sense a re-creation.

One long-suffering hostess gives this experience with a guest who was "a gentle unmitigated torment."

"How she could talk! Her words just rolled out as if they came off from a wheel. She usually made us a visit of two or three days, and during her stay my husband always retired to a room in the farthest corner of the house and shut all the doors between. After she was gone, I went to bed with nervous prostration."

Equally uncomfortable is the impression made by the friend who meets our friendly efforts at conversation with a chilling silence. Whittier relates the following experience one morning when calling upon Nathaniel Hawthorne:

"Thee knows that I am not versed in

small talk, but I wanted to make a friendly call on Hawthorne, and one morning (it chanced to be an ill-fated morning for the purpose) I sallied forth, and on reaching the house was ushered into a lugubrious-looking room, where Hawthorne met me, evidently in a lugubrious state of mind.

“In a rather sepulchral tone of voice he bade me good-morning, and asked me to be seated. We looked at each other and remarked upon the weather. Then came an appalling silence, and the cold chills crept down my back. After a few minutes I said, ‘I think I will take a short walk.’ I took my walk and returned and bade him good-morning, much to my relief, and I have no doubt to his.”

**CONVERSATION FROM A BUSI-
NESS MAN'S POINT OF VIEW**

.. . . .

"A real salesman is one part talk and nine parts judgment; and he uses the nine parts of judgment to tell when to use the one part talk."

Be sure to mend that in thyself which thou observest doth exceedingly displease thee in others.

BISHOP PATRICK

"Be pitiful, be courteous."

CHAPTER X

SPEAKING of a certain vexatious client who wasted his time with needless conversation, a lawyer said the other day:

"After this man had consumed half an hour of my time with this idle talk, I took down my day book and added an extra charge of ten dollars to his bill. If a man takes my time, he must pay for it."

A modiste, speaking of her customers, said with like honesty:

"I always charge extra when they use up extra time with needless fussiness and talking. I must do it. My time means money."

A tired physician, speaking with that patience a physician of all men learns, said:

"It is not the work that is killing me, but the talking. I am simply talked to death."

One patient who had exasperated her physician to the last degree by asking all manner of useless questions, finally turned back once more to ask:

"Doctor, can I eat oysters?"

"Yes," replied the physician with the calmness of despair, "eat shells and all."

A manufacturer, completely disheartened by the callers who did not scruple to distract his attention and use up his time, said:

"Finally, I simply shut my mouth. It was the only way to be rid of them."

Every one knows how bank clerks dislike to attend the window set aside for women because women fret at them and scold. A business man's life is a strenuous one with so constant a strain upon his patience and good-nature that he does not need scolding. What he does need is a word of good cheer or appreciation that will renew his strength and give him fresh courage.

"There are so many things to dishearten a business man," said one of them, "that we feel a kind word to be an advantage. We don't always get it. People may be delightful socially, but when they meet you in a business way they are so different."

"That is true," said another business man, "people may be as nice as they

can be in company, but when they come into the store they part company with their manners and are so fussy, so fault-finding, so discourteous, it takes a man's heart out of him. You don't know people until you go into business."

Valuable points given by a business man are as follows:

"Count your own time as precious and you will not burden other people.

"Remember that persons in public, as well as private positions and places, must have regard for their time.

"When you have an engagement, think of the subject beforehand, and avoid wasting many minutes because unprepared."

Time has money value, and the man who takes our time with idle conversa-

tion is no better than any other highway robber.

A little thought will show you how much your happiness depends upon the way others treat you. Be gentle and courteous to every one. You can afford it.

HOME CONVERSATION

"The blessed influence of loving speech, day after day and month after month, it is impossible to estimate. It is like the falling of warm spring sunshine and rain on the garden. Beauty and sweetness of character are likely to come from such a home."

That so little is realized when so much is possible is one of the saddest things about our current life.

J. R. MILLER

CHAPTER XI

AN old lady mending the fire one winter's day said, as she laid on carefully an extra stick of wood:

"One stick can't burn alone any more than one heart can."

There is a sense of comfort and fellowship when the family are together which gives to home talk a warm impulse, and sends thrilling into the stories, experiences, or bits of mirth recounted in the fireside circle the subtlest essences of life. Plain and homely as the words may be, they are constantly making impressions upon character, strengthening friendship, and

giving to love those memories that will be precious when the fire dies down to ashes and the last stick blackens in silence because it cannot burn alone.

Where true and sincere love abides, the home should be a foretaste of paradise, but, unfortunately, poor human beings have not always the tongues of angels even when love is in their hearts, and within our own four walls, freed from the restraints of outside opinion, the small, sweet courtesies of social intercourse are all too quickly laid aside.

Two elderly women meeting in the resting-room of a department store were exchanging confidences.

"And how is she today?" inquired one.

"Worse than ever. I can hardly live

with her and it is just as bad for the children."

"She is nervous. I would let her alone."

"Oh, I do let her alone. She won't let me do the mending or anything," and the poor old voice trembled with grief. It was easy enough to fill out the story of a home made wretched and joyless by one irritable woman's rasping, shameless tongue.

"I am so tired," said a woman whose husband had been scolding, "but these hard words are the hardest of all to bear."

A man who was uniformly genial abroad and surly at home, excused himself to his wife by saying that he must be natural sometimes, and this explana-

tion touches the root of the whole matter. At home, we do drop restraint and are natural, then how important it is that the inner nature should be true and sweet. Out of the heart are the issues of life, and if the heart be kind, one's conversation should be the natural flowering of that kindness. Not only must the heart be kind, but the spirit must be controlled. We read of a giant of a man who has fled from his home to escape the little woman whose words come like hailstones, or of the mother, truly affectionate at heart, who serves her family with such fretfulness that the bread she has made with her own hands is eaten with bitterness. A boy usually prefers a thrashing to his mother's scolding. Words cut deeper than blows.

Love so patiently endures all things that in the home life we too often forget those who love us most are so much the more in our power to be hurt by a trifling word. A young German planned to surprise his American wife with a Christmas tree such as he had known in the Fatherland. He worked until late in the night and arose at an unheard-of hour on Christmas morning to complete the trimming of the tree. It stood on a table spread with a white cloth, on which he had arranged as tastefully as possible his gifts of love. He could almost smell the spice of the *lebkuchen*, and there were tears in his eyes as he hung the green boughs with candles. What a dear tree it was, and how it shone and sparkled not only with gilded

and frosted ornaments but with living memories! Then came the supreme moment when his wife was called—what rapture to witness her surprise!

Sleepy and uninterested, she glanced at the shining tree and then said coldly:

“What silly thing is that?”

This was all, and the husband had looked for the rich heart-flower of gratitude. Without a word he went out in the cold of that bitter Christmas morning and, with his hat crushed over his eyes, walked the streets alone all day. Only God knows how a thoughtless word may wound a loving heart.

That night, when the husband, joyless and hungry-hearted, returned home, the wife, now deeply penitent, threw her

arms around his neck. In after years a Christmas tree always shone and sparkled on that hearthstone, and the little children who danced around it heard none but kind and loving words.

HOME CONVERSATION

Is this the love that helps another to be his
best?

MALTRIE D. BABCOCK

Dost any man wound thee ; not only forgive,
but work into thy thought intelligence of the
kind of pain, that thou mayst never inflict it
on another spirit.

MARGARET FULLER

CHAPTER XII

PROSPER MERIMÉE, a sensitive boy, was reprimanded for some trifling offence and sent out of the room. He was weeping as if his heart would break when, just as the door closed behind him, he heard the company burst into laughter, while some one said:

“Poor child, he thought we were in earnest.”

From that moment he resolved never to show his true feeling again, and in after years this brilliant and polished man of the world, though kind at heart, was to all appearances a cynic.

"Margaret, will you go to church with me tomorrow?" asked the evening's wit of his unsophisticated cousin.

"Yes, Will," returned Margaret with a glow of gratitude at this unexpected thoughtfulness.

"But I am not going," laughed Will, while the company roared with merriment. Margaret crimsoned with shame, and to her dying day carried a remembrance of the humiliation burned in her heart at this moment.

In one of Mrs. Bunner's stories, the little sister says to the young man:

"You must now fall in love with me, and I will dangle you."

"'Dangle' me?" exclaimed the astonished young man.

"Yes. That means I'll have you hang-

ing around me all the time, and have everybody laughing at you.”

“Exceedingly pleasant,” mused the young man.

Such seems to be the height of the girl flirt’s ambition—to have a crowd of young men around her to dangle. To gratify this ambition, they give time and brains enough to have acquired some useful profession; they spend every God-given gift just to trifle with the dearest and most precious relations of human love and friendship and vulgarize their own natures.

“Oh, it doesn’t hurt him,” beamed a rosy-cheeked girl.

Perhaps not. Certainly if he had any manliness he would never show that he was wounded to the heart by a frivolous

girl. The scratch probably is a trifling one, and he will forget it, but the harm done is in allowing him to believe that a woman can be insincere.

It is equally sure that the greatest misfortune an innocent, pure-hearted girl can receive in her social life is to find that the men who talk with her and amuse her with idle nothings and sugared flatteries are at heart untrue.

Nothing can be more fascinating than the real out-speaking of the human heart, and before a word of love that is genuine, opens fresh and delicate bloom of thoughts and feelings as sweet to be remembered as the breath of a garden of roses. To laugh at any such expression of real feeling, at suffering, or at the sacredness of one's religious

life, is not wit, but a brutal lack of both wit and feeling. To carry on what George MacDonald styles "that huckster's business called flirting," is to be prompted by such selfish greed for admiration as makes the thought of a flirt far from agreeable; to trifle with any true and earnest friendship is to create a distrust in human nature which will in time destroy all sweet and conscious happiness in bright, pure social life.

"We sat out on the porch," writes a thoughtful girl, "and talked a great deal. It seemed that we all had a foolish spell on us. When I came to my room I felt I would give anything to have had the conversation of the evening entirely obliterated. Not that we said anything harmful, but the conversation had not been uplifting."

THE DIFFIDENT MAN

He then ran over in his mind all the opportunities he had had for putting in something smart, and bitterly regretted those lost opportunities, and made the smart things and beat the air with them.

We go and fancy that every one is thinking of us. But he is not; he is like us,—he is thinking of himself.

CHARLES READE

CHAPTER XIII

OF all men the diffident man has the most need of help in conversation. He is frightened by his own silence, or confused by the silence of those to whom he speaks. His ideas slip away from him the moment he wants to use them; his truest, deepest feeling cannot find words; his wit comes several hours too late. Sometimes he cannot talk at all, and again, nervously agitated, he talks so much that he has a great deal of which to repent. If the diffident man does say the right word, it is sure to be at the wrong time, and of nothing is he sure, except that he is a simpleton.

If diffident people only realized how many other diffident people there are in the world, they would gather courage, and if they knew how little heed is given to conventional speeches in polite society, they might not be afraid. A delicious illustration of this is given by Dr. Hale in his humorous story, "My Double and How He Undid Me." Taken from the poorhouse, Dennis, an ignorant man, learns by heart four conventional speeches which are numbered one, two, three and four.

1. "Very well, thank you, and you?"
This for an answer to casual salutations.

2. "I am very glad you liked it."

3. "There has been so much said and so well said, that I will not occupy the time."

4. "I agree, in general, with my friend on the other side of the room."

These simple speeches, together with a new suit of clothes, carry Dennis well through society, where his brilliance was never questioned for the reason that each one was so occupied in thinking of his own utterances that he never listened to Dennis.

The diffident man, half paralyzed with fear, usually fails to get in touch with those to whom he speaks, and consequently stumbles at every step. A diffident theological student, sent out to preach, used to take courage by saying:

"I know they won't kill me, and if they do, they can't eat me."

After a while he became so interested

in the message he was to give to the people that he forgot himself altogether—then his success was assured.

The diffident man is timid, sensitive, nervous, because his mind is constantly on himself, and his thoughts are constantly circling around self. Such a man will do well to interest himself in the daily news, pleasant gossip, a study of nature, in earnest work, or human intercourse of any kind that will rub him against other people, sharpen his wits, freshen his thoughts and get him outside of himself.

Diffident people have no need to be afraid of the world; on the whole it is very indulgent to them and loves them; consequently, a diffident, quiet, unassuming person, has as much power to draw

sweetness, sentiment and poetry out of people as a spring violet.

The trials of a diffident man always melt the heart, because sometime or other we have all had our own fears and difficulties, and social tribulations. The most pathetic story of a diffident man comes in this little shred of a romance. He had just been refused by the girl he loved and was simply crushed. In this state of mind, he wrote a note to another girl whom he had met but recently, and to whom he was under some social obligation. The note was evidently not very intelligible, for the girl construed it into an offer of marriage and accepted him promptly. The feelings of this timid man upon receiving a letter from a comparative stranger, accepting him in

marriage, are not to be compassed in words, but the wretched man was too timid to tell the girl she had mistaken his note, and they were married. The bride was a nice girl and made him a beautiful wife. Friends who knew nothing of these circumstances visited the family afterwards, and said their home was a heaven on earth—so ended the heart-breaking perplexities of one diffident man.

**THE USE AND ABUSE OF COM-
PLIMENTS**

"Then he began to compliment and I began to grin."

Love is sparingly soluble in the words of men, therefore they speak much of it; but one syllable of a woman's speech can dissolve more than a man's heart can hold.

O. W. HOLMES

CHAPTER XIV

A LITTLE girl on being asked what the angels said to Joan of Arc replied:

“And the angel voices said, ‘You dear, precious girl.’” This is an idea of angelic conversation that is shared by a number of grown-up people. The constant use of complimentary speech shows the real kindness of human nature and at the same time its weakness; its kindness in wishing to give happiness; its weakness in saying what is not true.

A fair example of society compliments may be found in this story of Alicia, a little girl, six years old, sitting on Mr. Buckley’s knee, who was heard asking with childish innocence:

"Mr. Buckley, what makes you have such a big nose?"

Alicia was at once sent to bed in disgrace, while her mother made it clear to her childish mind that she had cruelly hurt this kind friend by remarking with such truth upon his nose. A few weeks later, the incident having been forgotten, Mr. Buckley again visited the house, and Alicia was again sitting upon his knee when the company were electrified by a small, wheedling voice saying quite distinctly:

"Oh, Mr. Buckley—you haven't any nose at all a'most."

Tender-hearted Alicia, in one lesson how accomplished she had become in the conventional society lie!

"You are to me as an oasis in the

desert," sighed a young man to Alicia about ten years later, when she was a full-fledged society belle.

"Dear me, how pretty!" replied innocent Alicia. "What kind of a bird is an oasis?"

The sentimental lover looked for another oasis.

We seldom think of the true meaning of the word compliment, which is to fulfil a duty, and because this duty of speaking kind and pleasant words is so simple, we are the more liable to neglect it. A stern business man, who was parsimonious of praise at home, could not bring his mind to express a compliment to those near and dear to him. The love was in his heart, but he simply was unable to give it utterance. One birth-

day, however, with a pretty gift the wife found a slip of a note saying that she was more beautiful to him at sixty than she had been at sixteen and that every day he loved her more and more. Alicia read the note with eyes swimming in tears. The ornament of gold and gems was forgotten, but the sweet words glorified her life.

"Oh, I like Miss Percy, she knows how a fellow feels!"

Miss Percy upon hearing of this compliment said she considered it the most precious she had ever received because it was genuine. One word, genuinely true, touches the heart more than a volume of flatteries.

A woman distinguished in her profession, and who had received in her life-

time "a whole Smyrna rose-garden" of compliments, counted this, which followed after an address before her fellow-workers, as the very best:

"I like your words. You know what you are talking about."

Contrast this plain, true speech with the compliment a beau in curled wig, embroidered ruffles, and peach-blossom waistcoat, paid a hundred years ago to the belle in powder, patches, and silver-brocaded gown:

"Madame," said he, "I never in my life heard anything that gave me such Pleasure as your Voice; nor did my Heart ever before experience such sensations as your singing excited."

"This Speech threw the most agreeable and accomplished young woman of

the world into greater confusion than the compliments of all the rest of the Company."

"Sir," said she, "I am very happy if it has been in my Power to give you any Entertainment; It is the most agreeable success so trifling an Accomplishment can hope."

"What an elegant creature you are!" exclaimed a gallant in passing a fine-looking girl on the street in Madrid.

"Oh, that is nothing," said the girl, an American, to her chaperone, a lady who did not understand Spanish ways. "The Spanish girl who does not receive some such compliment on her daily walk regards her expedition as a failure."

It is this Spanish bombast which Cervantes has so ridiculed in "Don

Quixote," who writes to Dulcinea: "He who is stabbed by the point of absence, and pierced by the arrows of love, O sweetest Dulcinea del Tobosa, greets thee with wishes for that health which he enjoys not himself." In contrast is a modern valentine written by one of our own countrymen in an office where a man who stopped to compose a love letter would be pitched out of the window:

"Wire date

Can't wait

Be quick

Love sick

No joke

Heart broke."

It requires as much tact to receive a compliment as to give one. A notable example is that of the lady who ex-

claimed to a gentleman, handing her a chair:

"You are a jewel!"

"No, Madame," he returned with chivalry, "I am the jeweller who sets a jewel."

"That was a fine sermon, Doctor," said a young woman making her way up to Dr. Collyer, after the service.

"I thought so myself," was the Doctor's humorous reply.

Lewis Carroll writes upon the abuse of compliments, to a child friend who had been praising him: "The cold, frosty, bracing air is the treatment one gets from the world generally—such as contempt or blame or neglect; all those are very wholesome. And the hot dry air, that you breathe when you rush to

the fire, is the praise that one gets from one's young, happy, rosy, I may even say *florid* friends: and that is very bad for me, and gives me pride-fever and conceit-cough and such-like diseases; so please don't praise me any more."

The compliment that grand, humble, self-sustained man, Michael Angelo, gave to Vittoria Colonna would make the life of any woman worth the living:

"I have been a rough model; and it was for thee to reform and re-make me."

Many a man has the warm, generous impulse of appreciation in his heart, but few can bring it into words as gracefully as Sydney Smith, who gave his friend's wife this charming compliment:

"She could bring a rose into full

bloom by simply looking at it and smiling upon it."

The conventional compliment is a mere form, so tiresome to repeat that one cannot blame the lover who sent his sweetheart a postal each day with these words: "Sentiments unchanged."

It is the true words of love and praise spoken out of the heart which refresh friendship and, "like rose leaves, give out a sweet smell when laid up in the jar of memory." When Susie told Ruskin that his mind was as crisp as a lettuce he received the compliment with gratitude, and with a birthday stone sent this compliment in return:

"It is blue like the air you were born into, and always live in. It is as deep as gentians, and has their gleams of

green in it, and it is precious all through within and without, as Susie herself is."

An orphan girl whom the Lambs adopted, and who became in their home a considerate and affectionate daughter, was soon to be married, when Charles Lamb wrote:

"I am about to lose my only walk companion, whose mirthful spirits was the youth of our house."

The message he sent her the year before he died was characteristic of the tenderness and unselfish heroism of his nature:

"Tell Emma I love her every day more and miss her less."

"Never lose a chance of saying a kind word," advises Thackeray. "As Collingwood never saw a vacant place on

his estate but he took an acorn out of his pocket and popped it in,—so deal with your compliments through life. An acorn costs nothing, but it may sprout a prodigious bit of timber.”

A certain wool-dealer’s son in Stratford-on-Avon, idling away his time in dreams under a green-wood tree, or picking the winking Mary-buds beneath his lady’s window while the lark rained down its morning ecstasy from the blue above,—this lad has made us acquainted with some rare compliments. In the old-fashioned garden, which still runs riot around the Hathaway home, Will Shakespeare may have learned his trick of tenderness from Anne Hathaway, who had a way, he tells us, “to breathe delight.”

It was some June morning walking
in the garden with Anne, whose face was

"Clear as morning roses washed in dew,"

that the poet had his first lesson in love-making, so deliciously wrought out in the wooing of Prince Henry the Fifth, emphasizing the truth that better than all fine compliments is the plain and uncoined constancy of a good heart.

King Henry. Fair Katherine, and most fair!
Will you vouchsafe to teach a soldier terms,
Such as will enter at a lady's ear,
And plead his love-suit to her gentle heart?

Kath. Your majesty shall mock at me; I
cannot speak your England.

K. Hen. O fair Katherine, if you will love
me soundly with your French heart, I will be
glad to hear you confess it brokenly with your
English tongue. Do you like me, Kate?

Kath. *Pardonnez moy, I cannot tell vat is—like me.*

K. Hen. An angel is like you, Kate; and you are like an angel.

Kath. *Que dit-il? que je suis semblable à les anges?*

Alice. *Ouy, vrayment, sauf vostre Grace, ainsi dit-il.*

K. Hen. I said so, dear Katherine, and I must not blush to affirm it.

Kath. *O bon Dieu! les langues des hommes sont pleines de tromperies.*

K. Hen. What says she, fair one? that the tongues of men are full of deceits?

Alice. *Ouy; dat de tongues of de mans is be full of deceits; dat is de Princess.*

K. Hen. The Princess is the better English-woman. I' faith, Kate, my wooing is fit for thy understanding: I am glad thou canst speak no better English; for, if thou couldst, thou wouldst find me such a plain king that thou wouldst think I had sold my farm to buy my crown. I know no ways to mince it in love, but directly to say—I love you: . . .

And while thou liv'st, dear Kate, take a fellow of plain and uncoined constancy, for he perforce must do thee right, because he hath not the gift to woo in other places: for these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favors, they do always reason themselves out again. What! a speaker is but a prater; a rhyme is but a ballad. A good leg will fall, a straight back will stoop, a black beard will turn white, a curled pate will grow bald, a fair face will wither, a full eye will wax hollow, but a good heart, Kate, is the sun and the moon; or rather the sun and not the moon, for it shines bright and never changes, but keeps his course truly. . .

**CHARACTER AS REVEALED IN
CONVERSATION**

To have a volume of human character laid open before you and turn over its pages at leisure is one of the highest and most intense recreations known to man.

J. P. MAHAFFY

Never does a man portray his character more vividly than in his manner of portraying another's.

RICHTER

Le cœur de l'homme indiscret est un livre ouvert ou tout le monde peut lire.

SULLY-PRUDHOMME

CHAPTER XV

IN conversation a man may be judged in a number of different ways, as:

By his voice, whether it be harsh and uncultivated or rich and controlled.

By his manner of speaking.

By what he has to say.

By what makes him say it.

We judge of a man's character by his voice at times even more than by his words, for conventional words are often used to conceal thought, while the voice, sympathetic with mind and body, reveals in its vibrations the grief, weariness, vexation or triumph he would keep hidden. The man who would convey in

speech the impression of strength must give his voice some culture and keep it well under control.

A man is also judged by his manner of speaking. He who is anxious, hurried, suspicious of slights, thinking of self with no time for the interests of others, gives one an unfortunate impression of being present to himself, which is not attractive in conversation.

Exaggeration, the use of many words, aggressive display and lying, all speak of weakness and inferiority. We cannot expect sincerity from the weak or low-minded—it is a part of the strength and nobility of the highest soul.

“Bluster,” says Dr. Hillis, “is inferiority rising into consciousness. Gentleness is controlled strength. Small men

use lying artifices and disguises to protect themselves. Great men are as open as glass beehives and as transparent as the sunbeams, for they are conscious of enormous reserves."

Modesty and simplicity are outward signs of honesty, strength and genuine worth, and always win to themselves esteem and friendship. Modesty itself adds such charm to every other quality that it is often affected, as when a man displays his modesty by calling our attention to his ignorance, stupidity or other shortcomings, or by apologizing for some imperfection. This is the conceit of a mind occupied with itself and in no way helps the easy flow of conversation.

With experience of life, knowledge of

men and affairs, and assured position come humility and courage. It is the ignorant young practitioner fearful of losing esteem who asserts positively that he knows everything, while the experienced specialist at the head of his profession has the courage to say humbly: "I don't know." The world loves and trusts such a man.

The selfishness of the monologue is admirably illustrated in the following incident of Carlyle, related by Professor Blackie:

"I admired his genius. But how he would talk—talk—talk, and give nobody a chance to put in a word! One night I actually shook him. His wife had been trying all the evening to say something. But there was not the smallest chance.

I took hold of him and shook him, saying, 'Let your wife speak, you monster! But it was of no use.'

We judge very quickly of the garniture of a man's mind by the language he chooses, as may be briefly illustrated:

A company of well-dressed, fine-appearing people were looking out of the car window as they crossed the bridge at Niagara.

"I thought I should like to know them," said a fellow-traveller, "until one of the young ladies opened her mouth."

"What did she say?" asked his companion.

"She said, 'Ain't it nice.' I placed them after that, you know."

A modest woman, plainly dressed, in the midst of a fashionable company re-

remained unnoticed until, turning to the window, she chanced to remark:

"What an opal effect the clouds have this evening!"

There was not the slightest affectation in her manner, the tones of her voice were perfectly even, smooth and round, and her words, though few and simple, revealed instantly the cultured woman used to fitting fine thoughts into beautiful speech. From that moment she shone out as a pearl.

As for the material used in conversation, a man in choosing topics for discussion gives a clear impression of what he himself is like. An eminent journalist in Ireland was upon one occasion entertaining a friend in his garden when the latter made a note of topics discussed in

half an hour's conversation. It contained:

"Home rule—the budding of roses—the next election—amateur photography—the relations between England and America—the culture of chrysanthemums—Lord Salisbury's foreign policy—the proper use of the chafing dish—the reviving of Irish industries—the future of the Liberal Party—how to cook mushrooms—the silver question—the correct method of making an omelette."

Such a man has a strong nature with broad views of life as from a mountain top. Self is not mentioned once. In contrast was this conversation at an afternoon tea. Topics discussed:

"The weather—shopping (self)—

dress (self)—headache (self)—speaker's children, servants, family affairs—gossip—ridicule of the next neighbor—gossip—abuse of the other neighbor—suspicions — worries (self) — miseries (self)—indigestion (self).”

No one could feel flattered to have the notes of such conversation held up as a true picture of mind and heart.

By reading, travel, observation, one may gather rich material for conversation. “It is in the interest of those to whom I speak that I should read good books,” said Madame de Sévigné. It is also in the interest of those with whom we associate that we should read the newspapers a few moments every morning and keep in touch with the questions of the day. Besides reading, we should

use our eyes to see what is going on in the clouds and in the fields, or in the streets if we live in the city. Hamilton Gibson made a common wild-flower the most delightful subject of conversation, and John Burroughs can hold a company of girls in rapt interest with a talk about birds. Any good story-teller can find in a five minutes' walk down the street some quaint study in human nature or some delicious bit of fun.

For relaxation and amusement we always have gossip, and there is no harm in friendly gossip, if carried on in the right spirit. For the reason that we are human-hearted, we feel an interest in our neighbor's affairs and wish to know about this bit of a drama being enacted across the way, or in the pages of this

story lived on our own street in which we see, day by day, humor, pathos or tenderness turning so patiently the leaves. This golden gossip warms our hearts, draws us more closely together and helps us to appreciate more justly each other's virtues.

The mischievous element comes in when a man delights to spread before us all the ill-doings and misfortunes of his neighbors, when he ridicules pitilessly their idiosyncrasies and calls attention to his own virtue by contrasting it with the faults and weaknesses of others. Such a gossip forgets that while he is busy measuring and judging others, his own standards are measured and he himself is judged.

In the "Idylls of the King," the per-

fect knight was one "Who spake no slander, no nor listened to it." Nothing proves more conclusively that the world is growing nearer to this ideal of knight-hood than to contrast the conversation of men a century or two ago with that of today. Washington was more vilified by the generals in his army than any other man in the country. In contrast are these words from the life of Booker T. Washington:

"From General Armstrong, I learned the lesson that great men cultivate love and only little men cherish a spirit of hatred. I permit no man to narrow and degrade my soul by making me hate him."

The truly great men and women are the kindest and most genial in conversa-

tion. Of Walter Scott, Maria Edgeworth writes, "As I sat by his side, I could not believe he was a stranger and I forgot he was a great man."

"Sir Walter," testified his faithful old servant, Tom Purdie, "always speaks to every man as if he were his born brother." Such men have no fear of being called plebeian. In contrast with Sir Walter is the man who refused to say good-morning to his servant lest his dignity should be impaired. He forgot that his immediate ancestor had once been a bound boy.

Of Tolstoi, whose manner is said to be most courtly and finished, Jane Adams gives this charming picture after an evening spent at his fireside:

"In the evening, he gives himself over

to social life, trying to get the point of view of his visitors. He has the sweetest and humblest attitude possible—the only thing that could give social intercourse. The evening I happened to spend at his house there were many people of many lands, a large company who at considerable inconvenience had come together in this out-of-the-way place to sit in the room with the kindly old man.”

We judge of a man not only by what he says but by what he is.

“Andy,” asked his young mistress of the cook, “would you tell a story?”

“Cose not,” replied black Andy, who lived a saintly life. “There was Annanias an’ Sapphira knocked down for lyin’. O’ cose I wouldn’t tell a story—unless it was to put down a fuss.” Andy

was one of those polite liars whose words, humanly weak, were yet made for peace and love, and shone with the gold and silver of heaven like a dove's neck.

"She is a noble-hearted woman, she does not speak of her misfortunes," was a comment which shows how speech often betrays character as fragrance gives knowledge of the rose. The loveliest character is revealed by the men and women who speak with tolerance of every fault or do not speak of them at all. An illustration is the following delightful incident told of Fra Louis de Leon whose statue has been erected at the University of Salamanca. The simple people there sometimes kneel to the statue and say a prayer, mistaking him for a saint. His popularity with the students

and simplicity of life made enemies who subjected him to disgraceful penalties and even imprisoned him for five years. When finally vindicated and returned to his chair, he said nothing of his sufferings—and not a word of malice—but simply resumed:

“As we were saying yesterday—”

Such sweetness and forgiveness of spirit, says the historian, is alone worth the honor of a statue.

We consider most of all the kind heart, the motive back of the word—what makes him say it—for *being* is infinitely more than *seeming*. “A man who lives right and is right,” says Phillips Brooks, “has more power in his silence than another man has by his words.”

In the voice, the expression of the face, the unconstrained wayside talk, others see and feel the spirit that informs the word. Dr. Johnson said that no one could be under the same umbrella with Edmund Burke and not feel that he was the greatest man in all England.

CRYSTALLIZED EXPERIENCE

THE FOOL

Uttereth all his mind. **Psalm. 29:11**

Also is full of words. **EccL. 10:14**

The fool rageth, and is confident.

Psalm. 14:16

He soweth discord. **Psalm. 6:14**

It is as sport to a fool to do mischief.

Psalm. 10:23

He that uttereth a slander is a fool.

Psalm. 10:18

Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is
counted wise.

Psalm. 17:28

THE WISE MAN

He that is slow to anger is better than
the mighty.

Prov. 16:32

Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue
keepeth his soul from troubles.

Prov. 21:23

The discretion of a man deferreth his anger,
and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

Prov. 19:11

He that covereth a transgression procureth
love.

Prov. 17:9

The words of the pure are words of pleas-
antness.

Prov. 15:26

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet
to the soul and health to the bones.

Prov. 16:24

CHAPTER XVI

Speak the truth. Be pure. Keep the commandments. If you have anything to say, say it. When you are through, stop.

E. E. HALE

If we only keep back the complaining or insulting word, that we shall regret as long as we live, our feelings themselves will presently be calmer and better. By regulating the action which is under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate the feeling which is not.

WILLIAM JAMES

It is better, sometimes, for a person to keep still than to get into a chewing match.

HENRY A. PIERCE

“If you want to get anger down, don’t try to push it down. Go to the other end, and pry up good nature.”

“With argument every subject grows larger and richer between the cultured and self-controlled; but it is useless to argue with the irritable or unreasonable.”

“Improve your mind. There is no charm in conversation without intelligence.”

“Study human nature if you wish to understand people and come into touch with them. You cannot converse with a man until you are acquainted with him.”

Nourish the spirit and temper which brings forth thanksgiving.

ROBERT COLLYER

Banish disagreeables.

JANE TAYLOR

"Talk health."

Talk happiness.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

In true joyfulness many graces are included; joyful people are loving; joyful people are forgiving.

JOHN NEWMAN

"When the weather becomes atrocious, laugh every hour by the clock."

It is not difficult to make a speech if you have something to say, but it is very difficult if you have merely to say something.

BRANDER MATTHEWS

A talkative person is like an English

sparrow,—a bird that cannot sing, and will sing, and ought to be persuaded not to try to sing. But a talkable person has the gift that belongs to the wood-thrush and the veery and the wren, the oriole and the white throat and the rose-breasted grosbeak, the mocking-bird and the robin (sometimes); and the brown thrush; yes, the brown thrush has it to perfection, if you can catch him alone,—the gift of being interesting, charming, delightful, in the most offhand and various modes of utterance.

HENRY VANDYKE

When talk has any heartiness in it, the mutuality stimulates invention, and there are few intellectual cordials more refreshing. . . .

Good talking is talking by principle; and the central principle of all, in society, in speech, is unselfishness.

BISHOP HUNTINGTON

Be good, my dear, as I have always found you. Never be angry with anybody or speak hard of them. Try to let everybody's faults be forgotten as you would wish yours to be.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO MARIA

OUR NEED OF FRIENDSHIP

"A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found such a one hath found a treasure."

I do not care to ask anything of God, and yet I could find it in my heart to ask for the gift of a good friend.

HOWES

There is no situation, however melancholy it may be, when the heart can be insensible to the pleasure arising from the presence of a faithful and tenderly beloved friend.

AGREEABLE UGLINESS

For she's one o' them things as looks the brightest on a rainy day, and loves you best when you're most in need on't.

GEORGE ELIOT

On ne perd jamais ceux qu'on aime.

ST. AUGUSTINE

CHAPTER XVII

A YOUNG man in the city who could not bring himself to spend his evenings in the cheerless hall bedroom at his boarding place, and who did not care for club life, used often to be invited into a friendly home where the family welcomed him at their fireside. He confided to them that no one in the wastes of Africa was ever more lonely and desolate than he, when they rescued him by these social evenings.

Friendship is the sharing of life, and companionship the most valued thing on earth. Without it men tend to relapse into barbarism and noblest traits of character perish for lack of expression.

The root of all crime is said to lie in loneliness.

When two friends exchange ideas in profitable conversation, the pleasure of life is doubled, and the nobler the man, the richer the value of his companionship because we share with him his aims, his purposes and ideals in life. The friends of John Sterling used to say that no one could know his heart and mind without being ennobled. To be a friend like that means to cultivate mind and heart in every possible way, to catch every glimpse of sunshine, to garner every possibility of joy, to create the pure and lovely in the words we speak, the thoughts we think, until our companionship is an inspiration. Hugh Black says that even the recollection of

a friend whom we admire is a great force to save us from evil and prompt us to good.

Christ came into the world as a Friend to the poor and weak and broken, and the most Christ-like work in the world today is being done by men and women noble in mind and character who go to those who are most in need of friends, and live among them as neighbors, that they may give them fresh and pure ideals of happiness and life. After a pleasant evening, in one of these social settlement homes, an old woman came to a college girl and said:

"I never had such a good time in all my life. Now I will come some day and tell you my troubles." The poor woman felt that she had found a friend and

the thought warmed and opened her heart.

As the Divine Friend, in some mysterious way gives us His life each day and renews and restores our souls, so we in turn may give our life, and pour the balm of our love, pity and tenderness into other hearts.

There is something beautiful in the continuity of friendship, and the way it is passed on from heart to heart and strengthened with years. Few stories are more romantic than that of the friendship between Alice Gordon and a young Spanish girl spending a year or two in this country. The little Spanish girl, far from her mother and home, soon knew that in Alice, a laughing, warm-hearted school-girl, she had found a

friend, and the two had jolly times on Saturday afternoons romping in the hay-mow or drinking tea out of miniature teacups under their favorite oak tree on the lawn, or, on rainy days, in dressing dolls or snuggling together over a story-book in the nursery. The Spanish girl returned to her own home, married, and was heard from no more. Years passed, when Alice Gordon Gulick, making a pastoral call with her husband in one of his journeys to a mountain village in Spain, was startled to come upon a picture of her girl friend. It was then discovered that she was conversing with Amelia's mother. The daughter was no longer living, but she had often told her dear ones of the comrade Alice, whom she had loved so ten-

derly. At once Amelia's friends were Mrs. Gulick's friends, and through the husband, a diplomat with strong influence, Mrs. Gulick was enabled to establish her college for girls in Madrid. College girls are interested in raising scholarships for the girls of this Spanish school, and a tide of friendship has set in between two nations. Alice Gulick, now known as the Madonna of Spain, used to say:

"Great things begin small."

Every day we meet women hungry for companionship, lonely in their homes, desolate and friendless in their going out and coming in. The reason is they have only given thought as to how they might gain friendship for themselves. Women like Mrs. Gulick, magnificently

rich in friends, are those who have asked humbly:

"How can I *be* a friend? How can I *serve* those who are in need?"

"You don't know Mary well enough to be a friend to her," were the chance words that came floating from a balcony in the dusk of a summer's evening, and in these few words were folded the real secret of friendship. To be a friend to Mary, I must not only be aware of her faults and frailties which every casual acquaintance can see, but I must recognize the good qualities wrapped in the deepest part of her nature and love her for them. When I see Mary, all that is best and sweetest in her heart will leap to meet this recognition and we shall truly be friends.

Thank God, there are about us a host of strong, pure and royally unselfish men and women capable of friendship. The approving word of friends like these gives a man strength; the timely hand-grasp and good counsel quicken undreamed-of possibilities in his nature; when hopeless and ready to fail, the consciousness of a loyal friend standing near who is willing to help brings his work to a triumphant conclusion. To be such a friend, a cup of strength to a human soul in need, is to know the full joy of life.

CHARM AND POWER

It's not in the wheel, it's not in the hand,
It's in the girl that takes it in hand.

MARY LYON'S MOTHER

Beauty of voice, tender, considerate reverence and equipoise of manner will make it impossible for you to be desolate, and will insure you always being loved.

FRANCES WILLARD

"The secret of charm is to see the best in the person and address that side."

"There is no sovereignty for good like that which the truly good exert."

CHAPTER XVIII

"SHE reads a good deal, and she keeps her eyes and ears open, and she can tell what she sees and hears. Oh, she is charming! I love to hear her talk." This was said of an intelligent young woman who gathered friends around her because she was sweet and wholesome in conversation.

There are different charms in conversation as there are different personalities, and we should cultivate such gifts as we have. One man's speech has power because he believes that words were meant to carry values. He uses few, but he always has something worth while to

say and people listen to him. In every fine art the secret is to suggest the most with the fewest strokes. A proverb that embodies the experience of years has force, and he who can say much in a phrase, who can concentrate half a life into a sentence is always a man of power. Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, expressed the idea that the time had gone by when the people could be enslaved by their own standing armies. He put this idea in two words: "Bayonets think." The words spread like wildfire and immediately became one of the proverbs of the language.

A few have the reputation of being delightfully fresh and original because they tell the truth kindly and pleasantly in place of the customary lie. A physi-

cian, beloved as few women in this world, writes, "I am trying to be absolutely truthful, not having one thing false or exaggerated." Such a reputation has this physician for truthfulness that perfect trust is placed in her every word, and her patients say of her as the boy of his mother:

"I know what she says is so, if it ain't so."

A shining quality in conversation is reasonableness. It is said of John Mitchell, who has such power over the breaker-boys in the mines, that he is never dictatorial, but kind, patient, *reasonable*.

One friend has skill in handling conversation as a game. He never puts a question inopportunately, but holds it in

reserve to be sent out at the moment when it will bring the richest response and lead the way to the most profitable entertainment. To be able to impart information is good and useful, but to be able to suggest, to stimulate the mental faculties of those around you, to put others in easy possession of their own wit and good humor, this power belongs to the more brilliant order of minds. Mahaffy tells us there is probably no social accomplishment higher or rarer than to make others so eloquent they are thoroughly pleased with themselves.

A charm seldom cultivated is that of the voice, and yet an agreeable voice in conversation is more pleasing than any array of accomplishments. Our

countrywoman's voice has been likened to the screech of an American eagle, and her words are often enunciated so carelessly that they are hardly intelligible. A rare instance comes to mind of a girl who has cultivated her voice until her enunciation is so pure that every syllable seems to be cut in silver. There is surely no girl who by taking pains could not become like Shakespeare's ideal in his Cordelia:

"Her voice was ever soft, gentle and low—
An excellent thing in woman."

After the pleasing voice there is the choice of words. Only those who have made a study of language know how few people ever use color words with delicacy and feeling. I remember an English

sewing woman who knew how to put words together as pictures and also to use colors. When she gave us reminiscences of her old cottage home at Windemere, where a fire would be blazing on the hearth and *scarlet* curtains shut out the night of storm, we children were as entranced as with a fairy tale.

Any definite work or purpose in life helps conversation to run in a sparkling current; the one who toils with hand or head must have experience to give which has zest and value, and the acquaintance with human nature that often comes through daily work furnishes one of the most wholesome ingredients in good talking.

Another charm in conversation is that of listening. By listening is not meant

simply keeping still, for one may be as still as a lamp-post and not hear, or care to hear, a word that is said. The best bred woman in the world is the one who has heart enough to forget herself and listen to the affairs of others with unselfish, interested attention. Insensibly you are charmed, irresistibly you are drawn to confide in her, and the smiling sympathy in her eyes is more eloquent than volumes of speech from others. It was said of the beautiful Helen of Mecklenberg: "I know of no other woman with whom I could converse for twelve hours together without for an instant feeling weariness. I feel as if I had always something of interest to say to her, for *her interest never flags*. It is singular of the multitude who wish to

enchain their friends—so few ever learn this deep secret.”

“Miss N—— is beloved by every one,” exclaimed one of her companions. “It is not only her beauty, but her conversation which attracts. She never speaks unkindly of anybody.” This charm was not accidental with Miss N——. From childhood her tongue had been trained in the law of kindness.

In contrast to Miss N—— was Mrs. B—— who had never supposed that it required any training whatever to talk. As conversation is a traffic in ideas, charm in conversation depends largely upon the ideas we have to exchange. Mrs. B—— was a lady whose whole stock in trade was made up of the very personal affairs of her neighbors and of the

horrors and crimes skimmed from the daily papers. An hour in her company was a calamity, and socially speaking she was without friends. In time, Mrs. B—— joined a reading club, and with her intense interest in people began to read and study until, in a year or two, there was no scholar in the community so intimately acquainted with all personal details of the lives of great men and women. This kind of gossip was delicious, and Mrs. B—— presently found herself surrounded with friends who were not only charmed but instructed by an hour at her fireside, listening to tender little stories of the loves of poets or humorous experiences of distinguished people.

The most attractive girl I ever knew

could ripen peaches with her sweetness of temper. Her story also illustrates how a gift of conversation may be cultivated; and how it is developed with character. When a mere girl, Clara's uncontrolled temper, shrill voice and quick tongue, given to tantalizing flings and fiery retorts, vexed and humiliated even the friends who loved her. It was at this time that a cousin said of her:

"Clara is one of the most disagreeable little girls I ever knew."

With the awakening of her reasoning powers and real kindness of heart these faults troubled Clara, and she resolved earnestly within herself to be agreeable. She began cultivating her voice and practiced her sweetest tones at home. She also made it a habit to entertain her

invalid mother with stories of all the bright happenings of the day. She neglected no opportunity to improve her mind, and from a useful experience of pain and disappointment she gathered the tact and delicacy which helped her to understand people.

Her cousin, returning years later, could hardly believe that this charming, self-controlled young woman, whose conversation compelled admiration, was the provoking little girl he used to know. Her voice, pure and flexible, expressed with easy modulation the gentleness of a kind heart. She had an unfailing appreciation of fun, and the wit to draw a good deal out of it out of other people. Besides, she always spoke of what was cheerful, joyous, and entertaining, which

of itself made her presence a bright one. In story-telling she had a rare gift. Leaving out tiresome details, she recalled characteristic incidents with a light and delicate touch, and feeling all the humor and pathos of the experience, her words came with color, sparkle and glow until the little every-day happenings set so swiftly and vividly were as good as a play.

"We do not know," said Thackeray, "what goodness, what charity, what affections, what trials have gone to make up that sweetness of temper and embellish that perfect manner."

Thackeray himself gives us a notable example of meeting great provocation with patient sweetness of temper. At a dinner-party, the novelist, then at the

height of his fame, was spoken of by his friends with unqualified admiration, when Mr. H——, an author of some delightful books of the day, differed from this estimation in no measured terms. He judged that Thackeray did not possess any kind of generous sympathies toward the human race, and concluded his severe criticism by saying:

“I never have met him and hope I never may do so.”

Thackeray, meanwhile, announced under an assumed name, slipped quietly into his seat and heard much that was said against him.

With a gentle tap on Mr. H——’s shoulder, in his pleasant, low voice, Thackeray replied:

“I, on the contrary, have always

longed for the occasion when I could express personally to Mr. H—— the great admiration I have always felt for him as an author and a man.”

Mr. H——’s dislike melted instantly before such genial good will, and the two became fast friends.

Be sweet in temper, cultivate a close acquaintance with the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, learn to believe, hope, and endure all things, or give up talking. Feelings of distrust or impatience destroy the harmony of conversation and bring in discords, for which reason it is best not to talk to any one against whom we have a prejudice. Put aside such a spirit, for there is an insensible vibration between human beings that carries feeling swifter than words can

follow. This is why persons quite smooth in their speech may be intolerable as companions—we feel what is back of the words.

“This is not all I feel but all I can say,” was the excuse of a boy who had encountered the difficulty of putting feeling and words together.

“Never mind,” returned his friend, “I understand,” and the boy knew with gratitude that in some mysterious way his thought was transferred to the friend’s heart.

To convey a clear impression of one’s inmost elusive thought to another’s mind with the dramatic swiftness of really fine conversation requires a delicacy, quickness and warmth of feeling that amounts to genius. We who listen must in turn

be generous to a friend's ideas, and open heart and mind to them with hospitality that their riches and brilliance may quicken and illumine our own thought. This resilience of light and warmth is one of the finest facts and strongest forces of human intercourse.

There are some people who always shut us up. The moment they enter the room, we feel stupid and embarrassed, and nothing we say seems worth while, because nothing we have in mind has any interest for them.

The warm-hearted friend who appreciates the best that is in us is the one with whom it is easy to converse. She makes us realize that what we have in mind is intimately associated with her

own thoughts and interests. This opens a subtle means of communication, over which intelligence is flashed back and forth, so that conversation vibrates with feeling, and even broken words have in them the making of music. From such companionship we go out warmed and thrilled with pleasure and are so enriched and strengthened in all that makes for the flowering of life that we feel the more deeply the poverty and pathos of intercourse between people who are miserably shut into self.

To be agreeable in conversation is to have some measure of power; power to awaken interest with ease, direct currents of discussion, intensify feelings of joy or happiness, bring what is fine and beneficent to bloom at a touch of sym-

pathy, or to suggest vital thoughts. We have an illustration in the Morse telegraph, which, first suggested in conversation, has set in motion long trains of events and changed the whole course of modern civilization.

With age, charm in conversation should increase, for with fulness of years come accumulated riches of experience. I know an elect-lady over eighty years of age whose face is all smiling wrinkles, and whose voice, though broken with the infirmities of years, is still a laughing voice. Wherever she goes, young and old delight in her company and swarm about her as bees about honey, not only because her memory is stuffed as full of stories as her bag is of fine knitting-work, but because she loves people and

they love her. They wish an evening with her might never be done.

When Madame Récamier was old, helpless and blind, her dazzling brilliance faded, she was still adored for her sweetness of spirit, her thoughtfulness of others, her unselfish desire to please—"omnipotent little charms." The delicacy and perfume of things spiritual touching the world material, the richness of the nature which seeketh not her own, compels our hearts.

When Christ said to His disciples, "These things I command you, that ye love one another," He was giving advice which, if carried out, would fill human intercourse with heavenly delight. It is the nature flexible with love which makes all generous growth and development in

friendship possible. Love untired and expressed in countless gentle ways is conversation's charm, and the mightiest power in the world is a kind word prompted by the impulse of a loving heart.

END

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